

Guam's Emergency Communications Capabilities Expand

Release Date: March 13, 2018

Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were on Guam from February 26 through March 2, to install the FEMA National Radio System (FNARS) at the Offices of Guam Homeland Security and Civil Defense (GHS/OCD) and train key staff how to use the system.

FNARS is a nationwide High Frequency (HF) radio network that provides backup communications when other systems are compromised. The system provides robust emergency communications that were previously unavailable in Guam and with its key partners, and allows FEMA to maintain close communication with Guam's leaders during emergencies. FNARS allows real-time communication from disaster areas to support coordination and decision making.

The system supports voice, chat, phone patch, and email and serves as the primary unclassified continuity communication solution for national security and weather events for federal, state, and territorial governments across the country. The system is considered highly survivable during emergencies and provides back-up capabilities if all other systems fail.

FNARS has operated since the 1960s, succeeding previous radio systems that supported all-hazard responses. FNARS operates at over 80 sites, including FEMA offices, state and territorial emergency operation centers (EOCs), to now include the GHS/OCD. FEMA paid for all FNARS installation and training costs at GHS/OCD.

The previous radio system on Guam used a single frequency with 80 watts of transmission power. The newly installed FNARS uses 60 frequencies with 1000 watts of power, providing emergency managers the ability to talk with other Pacific islands, the West Coast, and other parts of the Continental United States with a greater degree of consistency and reliability.



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FEMA provided key managers and the GHS/OCD 24/7 watch desk personnel with an equipment overview and training after the system installation was complete. The installation concluded with test calls to the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI) EOC as well as the mainland United States. After the installation on Guam was complete, FEMA representatives completed the same FNARS installation in CNMI, expanding their capabilities for robust emergency communications.

For more information, contact GHS/OCD Public Information Officer, Jenna G. Blas at 671-478-0208 or via email at jenna.g.blas@ghs.guam.gov or FEMA Public Information Officer, Veronica Verde at 626- 646-6813 or via email at veronica.verde@fema.dhs.gov.

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GHS/OCD's mission is to coordinate and facilitate all Government of Guam, Military, and Federal Liaison Response Agencies and their resources in mitigating, preparing, responding, and recovering from any and all types of emergencies in order to protect the lives, environment, and property of the island of Guam.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.



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